Novel Study

The novel that I selected is *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing* written in 1972 by Judy Blume and the genre is Comedy and Humor Realistic Fiction Series. This is a story of a fourth grade student called Peter. He has a brother that gets in a lot of trouble and gets him involved in it. Peter won a turtle at a birthday party and discussed with his mom about the responsibilities that this brings. Also, how his brother did some things to the turtle. He tells different peculiar situations that he has in their house with Mr. and Mrs. Yarby, at his brother’s birthday party, in the park, at the shoe store, and so on. Sometimes these anecdotes made him feel like he is not important or even like he has to do silly things to help his parents make his brother eat. Peter as a big brother also tried to get the attention of his parents because he felt that Fudge was the only one that they paid attention to or worried about. Each chapter had real situations that the students will feel related to and I feel they will comprehend the story.

This book can be used with students between third to fifth grades. I can use this chapter book reading one or two chapter in class to discuss different subjects like the family, pets, professions, transportation. Also, some chapters will help the students express their feelings and help them understand some situations that occur in their family as a brother or sister. I can relate some chapters with Science, and we can research information about the turtles and birds. For Social Studies we can discuss the different types of transportation and we can compare with modern and old types of transportation. Other activities are related with Language Arts and will cover writing and comprehension. Also, the students can make posters, dramas, and even commercials to promote a new product.

*Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*

By Judy Blume

**Prereading Activities**

1. **Relating the Reading to Students’ Live:** Discuss family. Have students talk with one another about their brothers and/or sisters. How do they make you feel? Do you feel like you are treated fairly? Allow the students to create questions and share stories with one another.
2. **Preteaching vocabulary and concepts:** There are several concepts and some challenging vocabulary that some students readers will need help with.
3. **Building or Activate Background Knowledge:** Discuss pets and the responsibilities that come along with having your own pet. (Chapter 1)
4. **Building or Activate Background Knowledge:** Discuss the importance of visiting the dentist. (Chapter 6)
5. **Building or Activate Background Knowledge:** Discuss different types of transportation and their importance. (Chapter 7)

**During-Reading Activities**

1. **Silent Reading:** The better readers will read one chapter each day.
2. **Reading to Students:** The teacher will read aloud to the less skilled readers, one chapter each day.
3. **Reading to Students:** The teacher will do guided reading to the less skilled readers, one chapter each day.

**Postreading Options**

1. **Drama:** Character Catcher: Split the class in two teams. Each team will brainstorm words that describe characteristics (e.g., motivations or feelings) of Peter, Fudge, Mother, Father, Mr. Yarby, and Mrs. Yarby. Cut the words apart. The opposite team will see if they can match the word to the appropriate character. (Chapter 1 and 2)
2. **Discussion:** Discuss how sometimes people do not want to perform certain acts (i.e. stand on head to get Fudge to eat) but have to in order to help someone else. Brainstorm a list of acts of kindness and perform one. (Chapter 3)
3. **Writing and Questioning:** Re-write the ending of chapter 4. Consider the following questions:
   1. If you were Peter, how would you have handle Fudge jumping off the playground equipment?
   2. Do you think it was right for Peter’s mother to blame him for the accident?
   3. If you were Peter, how would you have responded to his mother blaming him?
   4. Would you accept her apology?
4. **Graphic:** The students will make a chart comparing the three other toddlers who attended Fudge’s birthday party.
5. **Questioning:** The teacher will ask the students to match the job/profession to the character.
6. **Artistic:** The students will create a character sketch of either Peter or Fudge. This sketch must include: name, drawing of what your character looks like, and characteristics about character (at least 5).